

Because an ETCP Recognized Employer said so

Full commitment to Certification builds your team and your credibility

“BUT, WHY?” Anyone who has been a parent, owned a business, or managed employees can hear the tell-tale whine of, “But, WHY? do I have to . . .” and then fill in your own blank: “go to bed now,” “fill out this paperwork,” or, “make sure I calculate the loads on my points before hanging them?” Prior to the ETCP certification program, the answer was so often, “Because I said so.” We all know how the story ends when the only available answer is, “Because I said so . . .” That model does not always provide for excellence from your employees (or those pesky toddlers, either). The framework of the ETCP Recognized Employer Program allows employers to set a standard and protocol for quality work within an organization while creating a team and brand based in excellence and quality.

Sam Fisher, General Manager of Fisher Theatrical, LLC, became an ETCP Certified



“When you raise the bar higher and ask your employees to reach for it, morale, work ethic, and quality rise across the board.”

Rigger at the inaugural test during LDI in 2005. Fisher Theatrical joined the ETCP Recognized Employer Program shortly after it was offered. Located just outside Baltimore, MD, Fisher Theatrical is a full service rigging and lighting systems installer, so we were eager to become part of the ETCP Rigging and Entertainment Electrician Certification Program.

Validating a commitment to employee and installation safety, encouraging education and training for certification renewal, and most importantly, “promoting honesty and integrity” are key motivations for our participation in the program. The program helps to solidify a brand and a philosophy in our day-to-day business practices. When you raise the bar higher and ask your employees to reach for it, morale, work ethic, and quality rise across the board. Like most employers, we seek excellence from our staff and the ETCP program allows us to reach higher goals as an organization. We believe the philosophy of the program filters into other aspects of our organization including strengthening our commitment to honest dealings with all of our customers, vendors, and employees. We even think the coffee tastes better now.

Outside of the employee/employer

relationship, our participation in the program has provided a stronger level of trust with our customers. Many businesses have worked with clients who, when told their rigging is unsafe, responded with, “Well, it hasn’t failed before” or with the dreaded, “We’ve always done it that way, it must not be wrong.” Having the weight of ETCP Certified Technicians and ETCP Employer Recognition behind our company brand allows a customer to find a level of trust that was previously unavailable. And while we may have established that trust with clients who interact with us on a regular basis, the real effect is seen when we have to justify a new rigging system to a school board. The sale becomes easier due to the ETCP program and the other work of ESTA, while keeping students, performers, and others in our industry safe.

As this valuable program continues to grow and improve, we are certain the industry will realize benefits across the board, including employees reaching for new levels of excellence in your business, as well as customers relying on and trusting in your advice to improve safety. Unfortunately, I can’t promise, “because Mommy is an ETCP Recognized Employer” will get your toddlers to listen. ■

Kacey Fisher is President of Fisher Theatrical, a full-service theatrical dealer based in Hanover, MD. Kacey is a member of ESTA’s Business Education and Generation ESTA Committees as well as the Chair of the Chesapeake Section of USITT.

Achieving ETCP certification is a huge benefit to employer and employees alike

Certification for your staff is worth the investment

MOST, IF NOT ALL, of us business owners and managers operate under a creed of “work hard,” “do the right thing at all times,” and “always use common sense.” But are these enough? And, what is common sense? ETCP can help us in our path of learning. The incredibly talented pool of folks that have assembled to define what it is that one needs to know to be considered qualified through ETCP helps us define and understand much more than what might be considered as common sense in the areas of Arena Rigging, Theatre Rigging, and for an Entertainment Electrician. I have witnessed first hand what it is like to employ staff that prepare for, undergo the testing, and feel the rush of energy and confidence that receiving their certification provides, and it is an extremely enjoyable experience.

“It is my belief that having ETCP certified staff is a distinct competitive advantage.”

At Creative Stage Lighting, we have an initial goal in place that intends to see all of our sales managers, rental technicians, as well as all electrical assembly management and technicians become ETCP Entertainment Electrician Certified. We provide all study materials we are asked to obtain and cover all expenses to take the test as an incentive. Additionally, we provide bonuses to our personnel upon receiving their certification. It is my belief that having

ETCP certified staff is a distinct competitive advantage. Creative became an ETCP Recognized Employer in 2007. We seek ETCP certifications, as well as many other industry related certifications, in our new hires. Because of that commitment, during LDI2007, three members of our staff took the ETCP Entertainment Electrician exam.

It is my belief that in the future a tipping point will occur where those professionals holding certifications will be in the majority. Then shortly thereafter, certifications will become more of a requirement in our industry. In today’s times, it can be challenging for any one individual to sift through all the information and technology we are exposed to daily. Having the basic direction already determined by ETCP takes a good deal of this pressure off determining what is worth learning. It is fascinating to be in our industry at this time as we continue to mature through developments like ETCP.

Might employees also benefit from ETCP in ways that will create energy and assist their ongoing training programs and knowledge initiatives? At Creative, we believe the program does provide substantial value in these areas and may serve our companies as a base on which to develop standards in addition to laying the foundation blocks of knowledge, making certification well worth the investments in labor and costs of testing. ETCP certification is an impartial industry standard to reach. Additionally, it is a way for both employers and employees to substantiate their qualifications and

capabilities when sharing this knowledge either on a job site or in a customer service related forum.

Participation in ETCP also serves as a stepping stone for employees from which to launch more challenging goals and seek greater levels of knowledge. As employers, we become engaged, energized, and renewed when working with staff that personally takes on these focuses. We become challenged as well to become stronger leaders by supporting these efforts. As they say, “the teacher learns twice” and we can all use a periodic review of what we already know, or at least feel we do. ■



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